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ancient portion of the town. This portion has remained substantially unchanged since the colonial period ; and along with its antique houses, streets, alleys and docks, there remain the remnants of old families, many local names and traditions, and this historic survivor of the observance of the Gunpowder Plot. But it will not apparently survive much longer in Portsmouth. Every year the interest grows less and less and the boys who take part in it fewer and of a younger age.

The same may be said of New Castle, where even the name, Pope Night, has become confounded and the whole meaning of the celebration obliterated. It sufficiently attests the easy loss of the primitive significance of customs and observances and the complete transformation of their names, to note that in this obscure village the name Pope Night has undergone the absurd change to *Pork* Night.

John Albee.

CHILD AND SNAKE.—The legend of which French and American forms are given in the Journal (vol. v. p. 169) exists also in India. Sir Edwin Arnold, in "India Revisited," gives the story as related to him by a Hindu of his own child, whom he one day saw sharing her milk with a large cobra, and pushing his head out of the bowl when she wished to take her turn.

SIGN OF THE CROSS MADE TO AVERT ILL-LUCK.—To the query made in the same number, why the making of the cross on the ground averts ill-luck, the following answer is suggested : May it not confuse, or send a counter-current across the evil influence ? As Mr. Leland tells us in "Gipsy Sorcery," complications of tracery in ornamentation were supposed to have that effect. So in mesmerizing, cross passes break up the condition which direct passes have induced. Perhaps the origin of crossing one's self was to block the way, so to speak, of a stream of ill-will poured from adverse powers, in or out of the flesh.

Louise Kennedy.

CONCORD, MASS.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FOLK-LORE OF NEW ENGLAND.—The following items may be added to those included in a previous article (vol. iv. p. 253).

BURNING OF AN AMPUTATED LIMB.—I recently assisted in the amputation of the foot of a man who had had it crushed on a freight-train. After the operation, the friends questioned what should be done with the amputated foot ; one promptly decided the matter, by saying that it should be burned, and not buried, in order that the stump should not always continue to be painful, and the man troubled by disagreeable sensations, as would surely follow if the foot were put into the ground. It was accordingly cremated.

PRESERVATION OF HUMAN FLESH.—In Grafton County, New Hampshire, in the beginning of the present century, a boy was scalded so badly that a portion of skin sloughed off, fully one inch in diameter. The boy's mother preserved the section of skin in a dried state as long as she lived, which was over thirty years. She kept it very choicely among her valuable trinkets. When the boy became of age he picked up his clothes and started off to begin life for himself. The parents never heard of him

afterwards, but the mother would bring out the piece of dried flesh quite frequently and examine it very carefully to see if it had begun to decay. This she did as long as she lived. She claimed that her son was still living, for the flesh was well preserved. She said that soon after his death the piece of skin will commence to decay, and not before. After the mother died, about 1843, the sisters kept the piece of flesh as carefully, with the same notions about its preservation and decay.

SHOOTING WITCHES IN CREAM.—In one of the newer towns in Orleans County, Vermont, about sixty years ago, a farmer churned some cream nearly all day without "bringing the butter." He said the witches had got into the cream and that was the cause of all the delay. He deliberately loaded his musket and fired the whole charge into the cream, fully in the belief that he would do no injury to the cream, but would dispel the witches. It was not long before he had the satisfaction of seeing the "butter come," and he exulted over his sagacity in dealing with those occult forces. Within a very few years I have heard people express themselves in such a way that betrayed their belief in witchcraft. But they were not found in the better class of society.

A POSSESSED OWL.—About fifty years ago, while a father and son were clearing land in Grafton County, in the valley of the Connecticut River, an owl alighted near them, and lingered in their neighborhood ; they tried to take it alive, and made several attempts to shoot it, but the gun missed fire. The young man believed that the soul of some curious and ill-disposed person was in the owl, and caused it to approach, for the purpose of finding out secrets, or listening to conversation. After the spirit had gone, the owl was left free to act according to its nature and fly away. No owl, it was afterwards thought, could have turned its head in so human-like a way, unless possessed by the spirit of man.

LETTER TO THE RATS.—In Grafton County, a farmer's wife, being troubled with rats, was advised to write them a letter, advising them to leave. This she did ; but being a conscientious person, she also requested them not to go to any of her neighbors' dwellings, but into the woods, where they would injure no one. The letter was folded, addressed to the rats, and placed in one of the most frequented rat-holes in the walls of the house. The letter I heard read ; it was written in a very humble spirit.

John MacNab Currier.

NEWPORT, VT.

THE MAGPIE AND THE FOX (A Corean Tale).—Once upon a time a magpie had made its nest in the branches of a tree, and was rearing its young, when a fox came along that way.

"Mrs. Magpie," he cried out, "throw me down one of your little ones."

"No, I won't," said she.

"Well," returned the fox, "if you don't, I will climb up and take them all."

This greatly frightened the magpie, which in Corea is a very foolish bird, so she threw down one of her young, which the fox devoured. The next day he came again, and by means of the same threat, got another little bird.